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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 /069 W
----------119802 241412Z /43
O R 241220Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7466
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 JOHANNESBURG 0788

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, SF
SUBJECT: MOTLANA, MOSALA AND KLAASTE RELEASED FROM DETENTION

1. SUMMARY: DR NTHATO MOTLANA, CHAIRMAN OF SOWETO'S COMMITTEE OF TEN AND COMMITTEE MEMBER LEONARD MOSALA WERE RELEASED FROM DETENTION ON MARCH 23 ALONG WITH AGGREY KLAASTE, FORMER NEWS EDITOR OF THE BANNED WEEKEND WORLD. TWELVE OF THE 61 DETAINEES HELD SINCE OCTOBER 19, 1977 UNDER THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT HAVE NOW BEEN RELEASED, WHILE 49 ARE STILL DETAINED. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FOLLOWING FRONT PAGE ARTICLE ON THE RELEASED DETAINEES APPEARED IN THE MARCH 24 RAND DAILY MAIL: QUOTE:

DR NTHATO MOTLANA, CHAIRMAN OF SOWETO'S COMMITTEE OF TEN, WAS RELEASED FROM DETENTION YESTERDAY AFTER MORE THAN FIVE MONTHS IN DETENTION.

RELEASED FROM THE MODDER BEE PRISON WITH HIM WERE MR LEONARD
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MOSALA, A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN, AND MR AGGREY KLAASTE, NEWS EDITOR OF THE BANNED NEWSPAPER, WEEKEND WORLD.

YESTERDAY, AFTER HIS RELEASE DR MOTLANA SAID HIS COMMITTEE WOULD NOT CHANGE ITS STAND.

"WE STILL STAND BY THE BLUEPRINT WE DREW UP BEFORE OUR

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DETENTION," DR MOTLANA SAID.

SIX MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN ARE STILL IN DETENTION.
TWO OTHER MEMBERS WERE RELEASED LAST WEEK.

DR MOTLANA SAID HE HOPED THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE STILL IN DETENTION WOULD BE RELEASED IN THE NEXT WEEK AND THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD MAKE ITS OFFICIAL STAND IN THE COMING COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS CLEAR.

THE RELEASE OF THE COMMITTEE OF TEN IS VITAL TO THE SOWETO COMMUNITY COUNCIL BY ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 15. THE RELEASE OF DR MOTLANA AND MR MOSALA COMES WITHIN FOUR DAYS OF NOMINATION DAY ON TUESDAY.

CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI, PRESIDENT OF THE INKATHA MOVEMENT, TOOK A STRONG STAND AGAINST PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS AS LONG AS DR MOTLANA AND HIS COMMITTEE WERE INCARCERATED.

HE TOLD A MASS RALLY IN SOWETO THAT HE WOULD REGARD PARTICIPATION AS "AN ACT OF BETRAYAL" AS LONG AS THE COMMITTEE WERE DETAINED. HIS STAND WAS BELIEVED TO BE ONE OF THE REASONS FOR THE POOR RESPONSE TO THE ELECTION OF FEBRUARY 18.

CHIEF BUTHELEZI SAID OF THE RELEASE LAST NIGHT:"I AM VERY PLEASED FOR DR MOTLANA AND MR MOSALA. IT IS VERY GOOD NEWS.
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BUT I AM SORRY ABOUT THOSE STILL IN DETENTION."

ASKED WHETHER THE RELEASE OF DR MOTLANA CHANGED HIS VIEW ABOUT PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS, CHIEF BUTHELEZI SAID:"THAT WILL BE A MATTER FOR DR MOTLANA, THE RELEASED MEMBERS OF HIS COMMITTEE AND THE SOWETO BRANCHES OF INKATHA TO DISCUSS."

DR M S NYEMBEZI, CHAIRMAN OF THE SOWETO INKATHA, SAID LAST NIGHT:"WE HAVE NOT YET MADE A DECISION WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS. I SHALL BE MEETING DR MOTLANA TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION AND THEN SOME MEMBERS OF INKATHA. ONLY THEN WILL A DECISION BE MADE."
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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

ASKED WHAT THE IMMEDIATE PLANS OF HIS COMMITTEE WERE HE REPLIED:"WE WILL HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE PEOPLE".

THE COMMITTEE OF TEN'S BLUEPRINT FOR SOWETO HAS NOT BEEN ENDORSED BY THE PEOPLE OF SOWETO BECAUSE ALL PUBLIC MEETINGS CALLED BY THE COMMITTEE WERE BANNED.

SPEAKING ABOUT THE DETENTIONS DR MOTLANA SAID:"I THINK THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO A DIFFICULT SITUATION IN OUR TOWNSHIP IS PREDICTABLY TO INCARCERATE, WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL, PEOPLE IT IMAGINES COULD BE THE CAUSE OF AN UNSETTLED SITUATION. "IT IS A SOBERING THOUGHT BUT EVERYTIME THERE ARE DISTURBANCES WHATEVER THE CAUSE, PEOPLE LIKE US SHOULD GO TO GAIL," HE SAID.

MR PERCY QOBOZA, THE EDITOR WHO WAS DETAINED WITH DR MOTLANA FOR FIVE MONTHS, SAID LAST NIGHT;"I AM TREMENDOUSLY EXCITED THAT DR MOTLANA HAS BEEN RELEASED. I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT MINISTER OF JUSTICE SEES THE ABSOLUTE IMPERATIVENESS OF FREEING THEM ALL."

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HE WENT ON TO CALL ON THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, MR JT KRUGER, AND THE MINISTER OF PLURAL RELATIONS, DR CONNIE MULDER, TO MEET THE "REAL LEADERS" IN SOWETO NOW THAT DR MOTLANA AND SOME OF HIS COMMITTEE HAD BEEN RELEASED.

"THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO PLAY POLITICS BUT TO SIT DOWN AND EXCHANGE IDEAS WITH THE REAL LEADERS," HE SAID.

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THERE WERE EMOTIONAL SCENES WHEN MR AGGREY KLAASTE WAS REUNITED WITH HIS FORMER EDITOR, MR QOBOZA, LAST NIGHT. "I CAN'T BELIEVE IT IS TRUE. I REALLY CAN'T BELIEVE IT AT ALL," SAID HIS WIFE, MRS VALETTA KLAASTE, WHO HAS BEEN STAYING WITH HER HUSBAND'S NIECE SINCE HIS DETENTION. ALL MR KLAASTE WOULD SAY LAST NIGHT WAS THAT HE WAS THRILLED TO BE OUT.

MR KLAASTE IS THE FORMER TRANSVAAL CHAIRMAN OF THE BANNED UNION OF BLACK JOURNALISTS.

MRS ELLEN KHUZWAYO, WHO WAS INTERNED AT THE JOHANNESBURG FORT UNTIL HER RELEASE ON MARCH 10, SCREAMED WITH DELIGHT WHEN TOLD OF THE LATEST RELEASES. "IT IS NOT 100 PERCENT RELIEF, BUT IT GOES A LONG WAY. MY GREATEST JOY WILL BE FULLY EXPRESSED WHEN ALL THE DETAINEES HAVE BEEN RELEASED."

THE MINISTER OF PLURAL RELATIONS, DR MULDER, RECENTLY PLEDGED TO GRANT SOWETO FULL AUTONOMY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT. BUT HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT AUTONOMY WOULD HAVE TO COME VIA THE SOWETO COMMUNITY COUNCIL. UNQUOTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JOHANN00788
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780130-0515
Format: TEL
From: JOHANNESBURG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
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Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3213499
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOTLANA, MOSALA AND KLAASTE RELEASED FROM DETENTION
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, SF, (MOTLANA, NTHATO), (MOSALA, LEONARD), (KLAASTE, AGGREU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/03f537be-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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